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Amn Here to support

A SENSE OF PLACE:

DIVERSITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD IN THE ALEWIFE

I Item 27 of the ^{city} manager's agenda.

For over thirty years The Alewife has been the subject of comprehensive planning studies. Those efforts have consistently identified the same set of fundamental issues needing attention: infrastructure, environmental impact and the need to create a "sense of place." *which I will define as.*

A good definition is:

Either the intrinsic **character** of a **place**, or the **meaning** people give to it, but, more often, a mixture of both. *A SENSE OF PLACE IS A SENSE OF NEIGHBORHOOD.*

The fundamental problem with the four quadrants of the Alewife planning area is that with the exception of The Rindge Area Quadrangle there is little if any "intrinsic character" or "meaning" that people give to the Triangle, the Quad or the Mall. The Triangle is increasingly memorable as a long row of densely-packed apartment buildings that fill up the dead-end CambridgePark Drive, The housing is welcome but not to the exclusion of creating context with other varied uses. What "intrinsic character" that area possesses is not a positive one. Across the jammed Fresh Pond Drive, the Mall is a wasteland of circling cars, parking spaces and a forgettable central building that is waiting for redevelopment. The Quad is the largest of the four

quadrants and is itself a jumble of roads going nowhere and often incompatible uses: read trashtransfer station as the most dramatic.{footnote]

The last major planning effort, the 2005 Concord Alewife Plan spent considerable time talking about creating neighborhoods with a sense of place like those of other Cambridge districts. But as we have seen in the decade since the plan's inception the build-out, specifically in the Triangle, has been anything but "neighborhood creation " that would give meaning to the place or those observing it.

To build a "sense of place" requires not only a sensible infrastructure and environmentally sound arrangement of land uses but also diversity in those uses.

The 2005 Plan talked about mixed use, small scale shops, open spaces .community facilities but in the decade since the plan was created little of that diversity has occurred. We welcome the housing but it lacks a context of urban living.

A key issue in the up-coming Alewife year long planning study is going to be how to actualize that "sense of place" in all ^{its} the quadrants, Whether it is open space, a coffee shop, a corner convenience store more diverse kind of housing for diverse income the need ^{for} to variety and scale is paramount.

A sense of place in the alewife is but one of the many critical issues with which the master plan will deal. Each neighborhood has its own set of concerns that will be highlighted in that effort.

The master planning process with the first year jump start for the ALEWIFE is the way to begin to deal with these critical issues. ^{Ensuring} Getting THE PROCESS ^{started} funded and ^{into} operation is ^{critical} to getting ahead of the next round of one off development THAT WILL INEVITABLY EMERGE IN THE highly sought after Alewife area.. Therefore

I urge the council to approve the Manager's reasonable and carefully consider requesting for funding for this master plan with its emphasis on action and implimientation criteria.

thank you for the opportunity to speak,